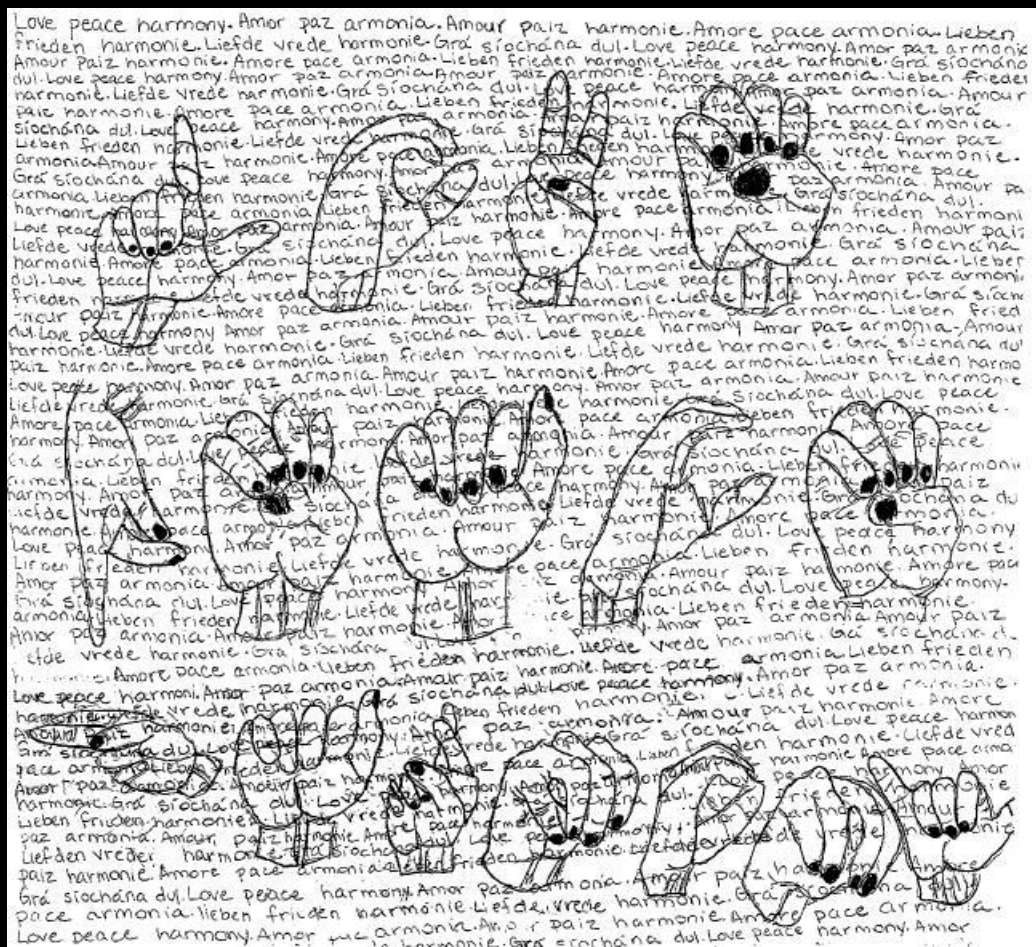


# 2013 ANNUAL REPORT

## HUMAN RIGHTS

## COMMISSION



Report Cover by:  
2013 J. Irwin Miller  
Human Rights  
Art Contest Winner  
Agustina Fainguersch  
Parkside Elementary



# **HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

Columbus, IN

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Columbus, IN 47201

(812) 376-2532

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[humanrights@columbus.in.gov](mailto:humanrights@columbus.in.gov)

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## **MISSION:**

***TO LEAD COLUMBUS IN BUILDING AND MAINTAINING AN  
INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY BY:***

- \* Enforcing the Human Rights Ordinance***
- \* Educating the public***
- \* Challenging attitudes and systems that create  
barriers to equality***
- \* Empowering community members to advance this  
mission.***

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## ***CITY OF COLUMBUS - HUMAN RIGHTS ORDINANCE:***

“It is the public policy of the City to provide all persons an equal opportunity for and in education, employment, public accommodations and acquisition through purchase or rental of real property including but not limited to housing. Equal educational and employment opportunities and equal access to and use of public accommodations and equal opportunities for acquisition of real property and access to credit as defined in Indiana Code, 24-4.5-1-301, are declared to be civil rights.

The practice of denying these civil rights to a person by reason of race, religion, color, sex, pregnancy, disability, national origin or ancestry of such individual is contrary to the principles of equal opportunity stated in this chapter and shall be considered discriminatory practices.

The promotion of equal opportunity without regard to race, religion, color, sex, pregnancy, disability, national origin or ancestry through enforcement, public education and other reasonable methods is the purpose of this chapter. It is also its purpose to protect employers, labor organizations, employment agencies, property owners, real estate brokers, lending institutions and insurance companies from unfounded charges of discrimination through the professional investigation and resolution of complaints. This chapter shall be construed broadly to effectuate its purpose.” -- *Columbus Human Rights Commission Ordinance 9.24.020*

## ***CHRC RULES & REGULATIONS:***

Through its Rules and Regulations Sections II, III & IV, the Human Rights Commission prohibits discrimination on the basis of:

- **Age**
- **Sexual Orientation**
- **Gender Identity**

In the areas of employment, housing, education, public accommodation or credit. Age, Sexual Orientation and/or Gender Identity complaints are processed through the Commission’s Voluntary Mediation Program. (See section II (W) under the Commission’s Rules and Regulations)

# COLUMBUS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE - 2012

### **Commissioners:**

Gilbert A. Palmer **(Chair)**  
Greg Lewis **(Vice-Chair)**  
Trena Carter **(Treasurer)**  
John Roberts **(Secretary)**  
Rhea Baker-Ipek  
Ian Kohen  
Anthony McClendon  
Rosalind Pegram  
Shiva Rallapalli  
John Stroh  
Andrae Marak

### **Term Ends:**

2014  
2015  
2014  
2014  
2014  
2013  
2015  
2013  
2013  
2015  
2012 (Relocated in 2012)

**City Council Liaison:** Jim Lienoop 2012  
Tim Shuffett 2013

**Commission Attorney:** Kelly Benjamin

### **Staff:**

**Director:** Lorraine Smith

**Deputy Director:** Frances L. Jordan

**Secretary:** Betsy Schuette

## 2012 CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

***Dear Mayor Brown, Members of the Columbus City Council and Columbus Residents:***



I continue to believe that Columbus has much to be proud of. It continues to evolve and reinvent itself in a manner that tries to be inclusive of all its residents. I am proud to say that the Columbus Human rights commission has tried to be part of that evolution not only through its enforcement activities but its proactive work as well. 2012 represented the Commission's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of existence. In those 50 years, the Commission has also attempted to be part of proactive solutions that makes Columbus a community that welcomes all to its city. Over those 50 years, the Commission has been committed to positive and productive responses to the demographic changes in its population and work energetically to insure that all people, including the newest members of the community as well as the oldest members of the community enjoy the same rights. I again extend congratulations to the staff and fellow Commissioners who put their commitment to human rights in their work to make Columbus a community that all people wish to join and place those who are here don't wish to leave. In 2012, the Commission continued its enforcement work, but also embarked upon some creative projects to make that pursuit a reality. The Commission created the "Adventures in DiverCity" to provide a path to personal awareness about various aspects of diversity. Through the project the Commission played a role in ramping up this community's ability to engage and provide opportunities for learning in the area of diversity.

Working with Mayor Brown, the Commission continued as convener and provided its support of the Mayor's Advisory Council on Disability and Accessibility under the facilitation of Director Lorraine Smith. With this newfound focus, the Commission is committed to making sure that this group provides an additional voice for Columbus' disabled community. The Human Rights Commission stepped up to assist with the update of the City's ADA Transition plan as the City staffed its Human Resources department. Deputy Director Francis Jordan spearheaded the process to ensure that the City maintained its obligation under federal law – an obligation that had implications as to the receipt of federal funds for the City.

These are just a few examples of the work that the Commission has been involved in over the past year, but as we look to the future, the goal of the CHRC has been and continues to be full inclusion of all members of city in economic and civil life. Protection of each person's human rights is essential to providing a high quality of life in Columbus and quality of life is essential to economic growth.

*Gilbert A. Palmer*

Gilbert A. Palmer

Chairperson, Human Rights Commission,

April 10, 2013 (for the 2012 Annual Report of the Human Rights Commission)

# 2012 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

## *The Year in Review---*

### VOLUNTEER COMMISSIONERS

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is: 'What are you doing for others?'"

—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Commission is comprised of Columbus residents appointed by City Council and sworn into office by the Mayor Columbus. The Human Rights Commissioners are volunteers whose skills and knowledge encompass business management, government, law, education, entrepreneurship, engineering, law, clergy, and religion. The Commission has been able to effectively carry out its work because of the caliber of talent of the Commissioners. In 2012, three Commissioners were reappointed by City Council. They included: Minister and BCSC Diversity Director Tony McClendon; Attorney John Stroh, Dr. Andrae Marak and East High School History Department Chair and teacher, Greg Lewis. They represent the wide array of skills that all of the Commissioners bring to the commission Board and most importantly their commitment and dedication. Indicative of that dedication, Gil Palmer, Chair of the Commission received one of the highest community honors with his selection as recipient of the 2012 IUPUC Excellence in Diversity Award for his many years of work on issues of diversity and human rights in Columbus.

**Commissioner Rhea Baker-Ipek** was appointed in 2010 to the Columbus Human Rights Commission to fill Commissioner Vincent's unexpired term, and in 2011 she was reappointed for three years. Ms. Baker-Ipek has an MBA in International Business, a BA in Foreign Languages with considerable experience abroad. Her life and work experience include being a full time Mom, working as a Sales and Product Trainer, and teaching High School. Commissioner Baker-Ipek completed her Juris Doctorate degree from IU-Bloomington in 2012 law school studies and has taken the bar exam.

**Commissioner Trena Carter**, a twenty-two year resident of Columbus, Commissioner Carter was appointed in late 2006. In 2012, she served on the Commission's Executive Committee as Treasurer. Trena works at Administrative Resources association (ARa), a non-profit governmental organization that works with local governments in Southern Indiana to assist in project planning and development to enhance quality of life by applying for and managing governmental grants, to implement those projects. She and her husband, Mike, are the parents of two daughters and have raised their family in Columbus. She has been a committed volunteer in the local schools, Girl Scouts, Leadership Bartholomew County and serves on the Human Resource Team and the Church Council at Sandy Hook United Methodist Church. Commissioner Carter served on the Ad Hoc Committee which planned the 2007 Annual Dinner Meeting in April, a special 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Commission.

**Commissioner Ian Kohen** was appointed to the Commission in 2004. He has been a member of the Columbus community for over eighteen years. Ian currently works at Cummins Inc. as a Purchasing Leader and has been a Six Sigma Black Belt. His outside interests include spending time with his two sons Max and Henry and wife Mary, playing racquetball, being a Big Brother, working with teens in the Turning Point Dance Marathon, and being part of the Columbus Rotary Club. He has taught the "7 Habits of Highly Successful People" to many groups inside and outside of Cummins. In 2006, Commissioner Kohen chaired the Ad Hoc Committee that studied the issue of discrimination based sexual orientation, gender identity and age, as it related to enforcement mechanisms available to the Commission. Ian has served as liaison to the Gay/Straight Alliance. Ian is very active in the community including Dance Marathon.

**Commissioner Greg Lewis** is Commission liaison to CAMEO (Columbus Area Multi-Ethnic Organization). He is the chair of the social studies department at Columbus East High School, where he has taught since 1994, and Central Middle School, where he taught between 1992 and 1994. He has become well known for his portrayals of historic figures, including a different president each year for the last 14 years on Presidents' Day. He has lived in Columbus since 1984, with his wife Nancy and two children, Lauren and Austin. He was raised in Louisville, Kentucky, and earned degrees from Miami University of Ohio, Indiana University, and Indiana Wesleyan University. He has demonstrated his commitment to public service through his volunteer work with the American Red Cross - Bartholomew/Brown County Chapter, Dance Marathon for Turning Point, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Youth As Resources, Columbus Soccer Club, and many other community service groups, as well as being involved with many student groups at East High School. Greg created and teaches an interdisciplinary English-U.S. History course called American Studies, and he developed a unit on diversity in America and makes issues of social justice a major focus of his teaching. In his spare time, Greg enjoys spending time with his family, playing soccer, hiking, traveling, and biking. In 2009, Greg traveled with a group of educators to Germany, a country and language he has long studied.

**Commissioner Andrae Marak** was formerly the Associate Professor of History and Political Science, IUPUC and is the Division Chair for Liberal Arts at IUPUC. He has a Ph.D. in Latin American Studies in History and Political Science from the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico; B.A. in Political Science from Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI and M.A. in Political Science, Syracuse University NY. Mr. Marak has taught courses that include courses on History, Political Science, Global Studies, Race and Ethnicity in U.S. History, Womens' Studies, Modern Asian Cultural History and History of Sport in America. He has published a number of books and articles, encyclopedia entries, book reviews regarding multi-cultural issues. Mr. Marak is former Associate Professor of History and Political Science at California University of Pennsylvania and former Director of Women's Studies at Cal U. He is a former professor of Global Studies at University of Pittsburgh. Mr. Marak has spoken widely and presented numerous workshops and papers on multicultural issues and has chaired a number of panels on multi-cultural and gender issues. Mr. Marak is the recipient of numerous honors and awards including Grant Writers Fellow, Cal U; Recipient of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) Diversity and Equity Grant and the Fulbright-Robles-Garcia Dissertation Fellowship. Before resigning to relocate to Wisconsin to accept another professorship, Commissioner Marak led the Commission's Welcoming Community II Grant Oral History Project and completed substantial groundwork on the project. He served as the Commission's liaison to Pride Alliance.

**Commissioner Tony McClendon** has lived in Columbus for sixteen years and he and his wife, Pat, have two daughters. He is Director of Diversity for BCSC. Commissioner McClendon is the associate pastor at Faith Ministries, the head football coach at Central Middle School and the assistant track coach at East High School. He has in the past volunteered as a mentor at Northside Middle School in a program focused on at risk middle school boys called TALKS. He is a native of Atlanta, a graduate of Dartmouth College, works in sales management and as an adjunct instructor in the English department of Ivy Tech Community College. He has special skills as a public speaker that he brings to the Commission as well as a special interest in working with local youth. Tony is served as Vice-Chair of the Commission in 2009 and in the past, he has represented the Commission as a facilitator in a Partners in Education Class (PIE) on Diversity Issues. He has also facilitated youth discussions in local schools, at the Commission's request. He has served on the Commission's nominating Committee. Tony is Director of Diversity for BCSC, and he continues to teach at Ivy Tech. Tony is a team member of the Oral History II interviewing team.

**Commissioner Gil Palmer** was first appointed to the Commission in 1993, and he has garnered such respect from his fellow commissioners that he has been unanimously elected Chairperson every year for twelve years. The Chairperson is required to work very hard for the Commission, as he is responsible for reviewing all findings of fact, and requests for subpoenas, restraining orders, and he must prepare and hold any necessary hearings. Gil, a graduate of Leadership Bartholomew County, is a State Farm Insurance agent who works long hours at his office, but at the same time works tirelessly on behalf of the Commission and as a volunteer in the community, including his service in the Columbus Rotary, Centerstone of Indiana and Centerstone Research Institute boards, Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce, Mayor's Advisory Council, IUPUC Board of Advisors, IUPUC Diversity Cabinet, BCSC Diversity Leadership Committee, Columbus Economic Growth Council and Senior Center Services board.

**Commissioner Rosalind Pegram** was first appointed to the Commission in 2007. Commissioner Pegram, who is from Puerto Rico, is a twenty-one year resident of Columbus. She is a former teacher for Monroe and Bartholomew counties. Commissioner Pegram has a M.S. in Education from Indiana University-Bloomington and is bi-lingual in Spanish and English. Commissioner Pegram serves as the Commission's liaison to the Immigration Issues Group of Columbus. She represented the Commission on the Immigration forum with Senator Greg Walker and Representative Milo Smith. She volunteers for Proyecto Salud-Volunteers in Medicine, and she is a Founding Board Member for the new Columbus Latin American Association. Commissioner Pegram very involved in her new business start-up business Tax Avanza which assists immigrants with tax issues as well as other financial issues.

**Commissioner John Roberts** joined the Columbus community nine years ago and he currently is Dean of The School of Liberal Arts & Sciences at Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana-Columbus, and in the music ministry at Faith Ministries. He has worked most of his life as an educator, teaching in the Louisville Public Schools. When he first came to Columbus, he worked as Christian Education Coordinator at First Presbyterian Church. He earned degrees at Morehead State University, the University of Louisville and National University. He has a particular interest in low income and minority students, and while working in Louisville, he served on a team that developed a successful enrichment program for at-risk students in the Jefferson County Public Schools. He has also worked with the disability community, and has an interest in issues facing senior citizens. John is a father, and a grandfather of three. He and his partner Thom are renovating an historic home in downtown Columbus. John has served on the Ad Hoc Committee of the Commission which studied and then recommended changes to the Rules and Regulations providing a mediation process for complaints of sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination, and chaired the Ad Hoc Committee which planned the Commission's 45th anniversary celebration. John serves as secretary to the Commission.

**Commissioner John Stroh** has lived in Columbus for twenty-five years with his wife and children, and he is engaged in the practice of law. Earlier in his career he worked as a public school teacher in Washington Township Public Schools where he met his wife, Beth, and developed an innovative team-teaching, multi-grade program. He has a long record of commitment to social justice, working as a church youth leader, school volunteer, professional actor, juvenile probation officer, U.S. Postal Employee, volunteer project peace presenter and volunteer lawyer for Legal Aid. John has represented the Commission as a facilitator in a Partners in Education Class (PIE) on Diversity Issues and he served on the 2006 Ad Hoc Committee that first studied and then recommended changes to the Commission's Rules and Regulations to provide a mediation process for complaints of gender identity and sexual orientation discrimination. An experienced mediator, the Commission is fortunate to have John's service on the Board. He serves as a liaison to the Inclusive Community Coalition (ICC). John for most of his service as Commissioner very ably serves as the Commission's mediator on cases where both parties agree to have their complaints settled through that process.

## COMPLIANCE, MEDIATION AND ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

(See Graphics, pp\_\_)

The Commission continued its primary charge of providing local solutions to local problems in providing complaint processing services for community residents and technical assistance to community members, businesses and landlords of Columbus. The Commission saw a large uptick in disability cases, most of them involving accommodation. We surmise the large swing is due to the change in the ADA and referrals to this office because of the amendments which broadened the definition of disability. In 2012, the Commission provided nearly 150 calls/walk-ins seeking request for assistance. A total of 15 cases were filed through our office: 93.33% of the cases were employment and just over 6% housing. Four cases were filed with CHRC; four were dual-filed with the Commission.

The office saw a significant increase in requests for assistance related to the issue of disability and particularly accommodation. This impacted the number of cases which remained with this office. Cases that involved accommodation were either dual-filed when appropriate or filed with sole with EEOC. Rather than split out a case whose bases were both straight disability and accommodation, which our ordinance does not cover, it was deemed more appropriate to have the case remain with one agency to provide for less complicated case processing for the Complainant. Close to 50% of the cases involved disability and some form of failure to accommodate which impacted the decision to either dual-file or file solely with EEOC. One race case which was sole filed with CHRC was mediated. The balance of cases filed either solely with CHRC, dual-filed with EEOC were sex, age, or retaliation. Sex comprised a little over 25% of the cases taken.

Close to \$12,000 in actual damages through the mediation process were paid to Complainants, as a result of the Commission's assistance either through cases filed at our office, dual-filed cases or through interagency assistance. The Commission continues to emphasize equitable remedies to discrimination, including training, reinstatement as a tenant or employee when appropriate, education, and restructured business processes in order to prevent future discrimination.

The Commission provided successful technical assistance on ADA issues that were resolved successfully which resulted in training provided by this office and a letter of intent to improve program access.

### MONITORING COMPLIANCE

The Commission is a party to written conciliation agreements, which resolve complaints of alleged discrimination filed with the agency. A Commission staff person is assigned to monitor the terms and conditions of these agreements, as well as Commission orders.

### THE COMPLAINT PROCESS

Columbus ordinance provides that any person who claims to be aggrieved by an unlawful practice in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodations, credit and education and can articulate a prima facie case pursuant to a recognized legal theory of discrimination (*based on race, religion, color, gender, disability, ancestry, national origin, pregnancy, familial status (housing only), sexual orientation, gender identity and age (voluntary mediation only) and retaliation*) may file a complaint with the Columbus Human Rights Commission. The Commission shall review and, if necessary, investigate the complaint. Complaints must be filed within 90 days of the last discriminatory act alleged, except in housing, where some complaints may be filed 180 days from the last discriminatory act alleged.

An individual may write, e-mail, telephone or come into Columbus Human Rights Commission office to begin the filing process. If the complaint falls within the Commission's jurisdiction, a formal complaint may be submitted. The staff is available to assist in drafting a complaint based on information provided by the complainant. An employment, housing, or public accommodation complaint must be signed, verified and notarized before it can be officially filed with the

Commission. Some inquiries were outside of the Commission's jurisdiction or beyond the timely filing limit and are referred to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or other agencies. The Commission offers a voluntary mediation program in all complaints prior to investigation, at the option of the parties. Mediation services offer a possible alternative to complete investigation.

When mediation services are not selected by one of the parties, or when mediation services fail, a complaint may be sent for full investigation. The Commission is responsible for investigating all complaints filed. It is also responsible for conciliation of cases where the investigating commissioner has indicated there is probable cause to credit allegations of the complaints. During a full investigation the Commission staff person will interview the complainant, review relevant documents, conduct interviews with witnesses, and summarize the case for the investigating commissioner. The investigator's role is that of a neutral fact finder. The Commission staff does not determine the outcome of the case, but rather gathers and presents the facts with a recommendation, based on the application of relevant civil rights law, to a Chairperson of the Commission for a determination. All information discovered throughout the course of the investigation is gathered in an objective and impartial manner. Depending upon the information obtained during the investigative process, the Chair makes a determination of either "Probable Cause" or "No Probable Cause." An attempt will be made to reach a written settlement between complainant and respondent if the Commission finds "Probable Cause." An attempt will be made to reach written settlement between complainant and respondent if the Commission finds "Probable Cause." If conciliation efforts fail, the case may be scheduled for a public hearing. If conciliation efforts fail, the case may be scheduled for a public hearing.

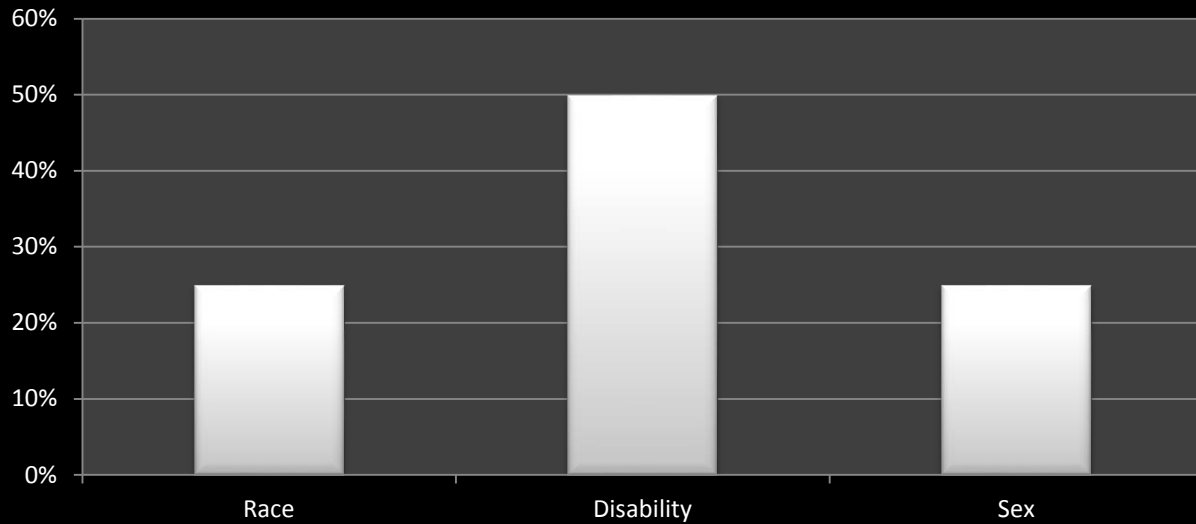
## **MEDIATION PROGRAM**

The Commission offers a voluntary procedure in which the parties to discrimination complaints filed with Commission may attempt to mediate and resolve their controversies short of having Commission investigate and process the complaint. Unlike conciliation—the mediation process can begin *prior to* an investigation, thereby saving both parties time and money. The mediation procedure has been an effective means of resolving complaints, as in some years, more than 75% of all CHRC cases were referred to mediation. The Commission is fortunate to have dedicated and hard-working Commissioners who serve as volunteer mediators, and mediation is offered at no cost to either party. If mediation is not chosen by both parties or if mediation fails, then an investigation is completed by the CHRC staff. If the CHRC staff recommends a Finding of Discrimination and that is accepted and issued by the Chair of the Commission, then parties are required to go to "conciliation." Conciliation is similar to mediation, except the Commission is a party to any settlement and monitors compliance, and may have certain stipulations of its own for there to be settlement. If conciliation fails, which is extremely rare, the complaint will go to public hearing.

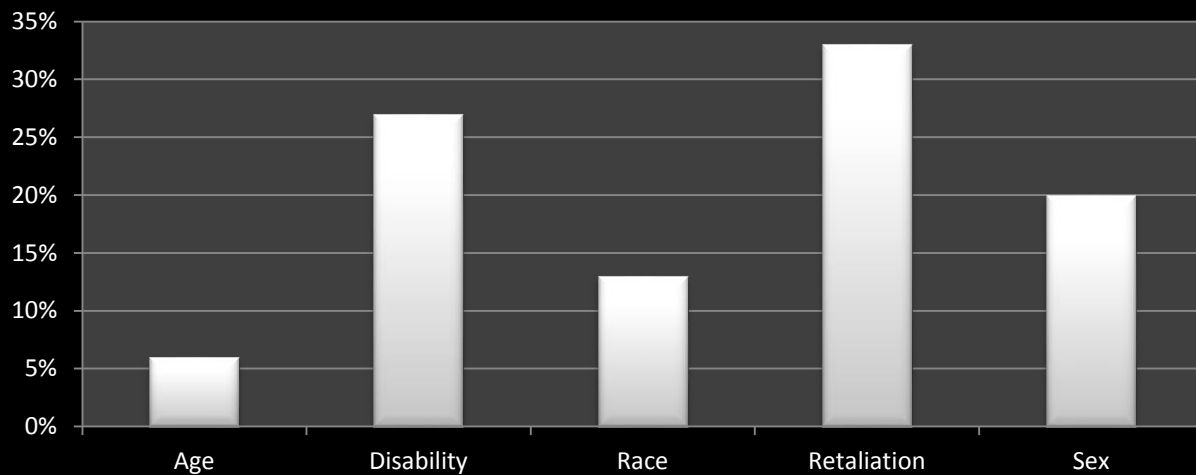
Mediation is entirely voluntary. Some mediations result in cash settlements, and other mediations may result in re-training or modifications in policy.

The Commission continues to emphasize equitable remedies to discrimination, including training, reinstatement as a tenant or employee, education, and restructured business processes in order to prevent future discrimination.

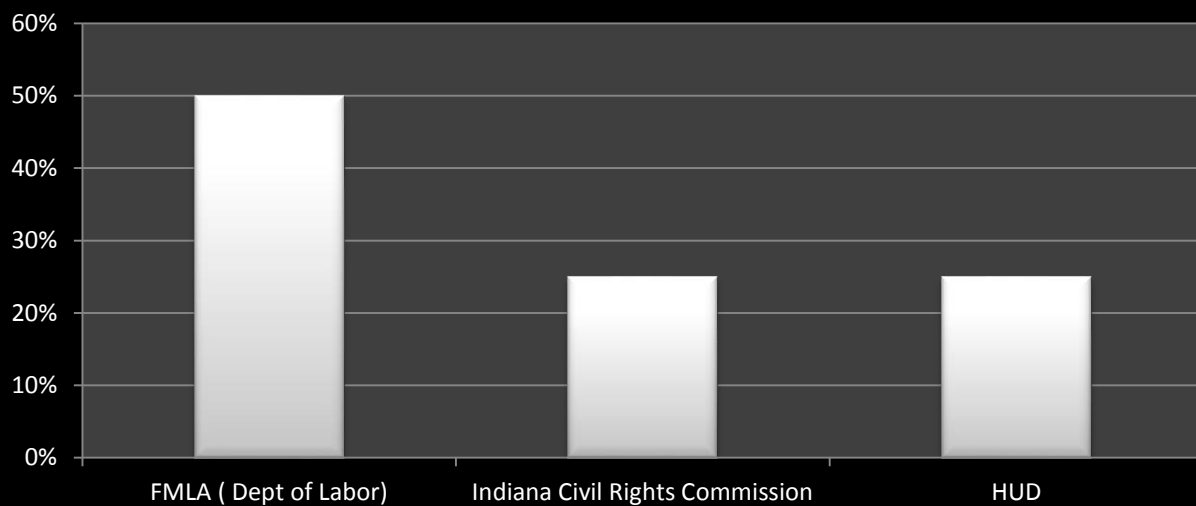
### Cases Filed with the Human Rights Commission



### Complaints Filed or Dual-Filed with the EEOC



### Cases Filed with other Agencies and Departments



## SERVICE WITHIN THE CITY:

### Mayor's Advisory Council on Disability and Accessibility

At the behest of the Mayor, the Human Rights Commission served as the convener of this council created by Mayor Brown. Over 17 applications were received for the nine member advisory board. This office: conducted the research and initial draft of the bylaws, solicited candidates, conducted the interviews and drafted the matrix of candidates for review and selection by Mayor Brown. The group's first meeting was held in October with ex-officio members from the Planning, Engineering and Parks and Recreation Departments. Mayor Brown as well as a community guest was in attendance.

### Welcoming Community Stakeholders Council

Born out of the Mayor's Strategic Plan Committee, of which CHRC Director Lorraine Smith was a member appointed by Mayor Brown, Tracy Souza Heritage Fund CEO and Director Lorraine Smith created a framework for a Welcoming Community Stakeholders Council in 2012. Building on the work of Heritage Fund's Welcoming Community studies and its spin off organizations, the Mayor will appoint a Welcoming Community Stakeholder Council to ensure the sustainability of this community value and strategic priority. The Welcoming Community Stakeholders Council will meet at least twice a year and review progress against developed welcoming community metrics. The WCSC will listen to the public and attempt to identify gaps and barriers in reaching our community vision and propose initiatives to close those gaps. The Council is scheduled to convene first quarter 2013.

### African American Monthly Meeting with Mayor

In 2012, with the enthusiastic agreement of Mayor Brown, Director Smith facilitated bringing together the leadership within the African American community to discuss issues and share ideas with newly elected Mayor Brown over lunch each month. The intent is for each to share ideas and build relationships. Chairperson Palmer, Director Smith and/or Deputy Director Jordan Attend and support these meetings.

### ADA Transition Plan

The Human Rights Department offered to assist the City in the Update of the City's Transition Plan. The City Engineer's office evaluated the Public rights of way, and Frances Jordan, Deputy Director assessed compliance of all facilities, programs, and services provided by the City of Columbus. Two public hearings were facilitated by and a draft report was conducted. The report will become official when presented to the Board of Works after the final review is complete, which is still ongoing.



## NETWORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY: PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS IN 2012:

### Welcoming Community II Grant - Oral History Project II:



The Commission partnered with IUPUC, Pride Alliance and Inclusive Community of Columbus and received one of 13 Welcoming Community grants funded by Heritage Fund. As Pride Alliance and ICC will document stories of the LGBT experience in Columbus, the Commission's project will continue documenting the stories of African Americans in Columbus as a continuation of the first project from 2000. The grant allowed the three organizations to purchase and share video equipment to record their oral histories. Five Commissioners as well as the Director will interview a variety of African Americans who can share their experiences in Columbus through lenses such as family, business, entrepreneurship, educational and other perspectives. The teams underwent an intensive training required by IUPUC's Institutional Review Board to ensure that interviewers were taking appropriate care in the interview process.



### Adventures in DiverCity:

The Commission partnered with Mill Race Center and received one of 13 Welcoming Community grants funded by Heritage Fund. Adventures in Diversity is an organized and hopefully fun way to involve Bartholomew County residents in events, programs and activities that focus on diversity in and around Bartholomew County - the goal to increase cross cultural learning and awareness and thereby create a more inclusive community.

With its kickoff in May 2012, the program acquired 70+ participants who signed up to be a part of the Adventures in Diversity. We have about 25 different people actively participating in the "Adventure." The second half of the program, which continues into 2013, hopes to double in new participation as compared to the first half. The finale reception is scheduled for May 14, 2013.

#### Adventures in Diversity Fast Facts (As of November 2012):

- Number of Evaluations: 35
- Number of Registrants: 77
- Number of Events to Dates: 30
- Roulette Award: Jason Maddix (First Prize Awarded!)

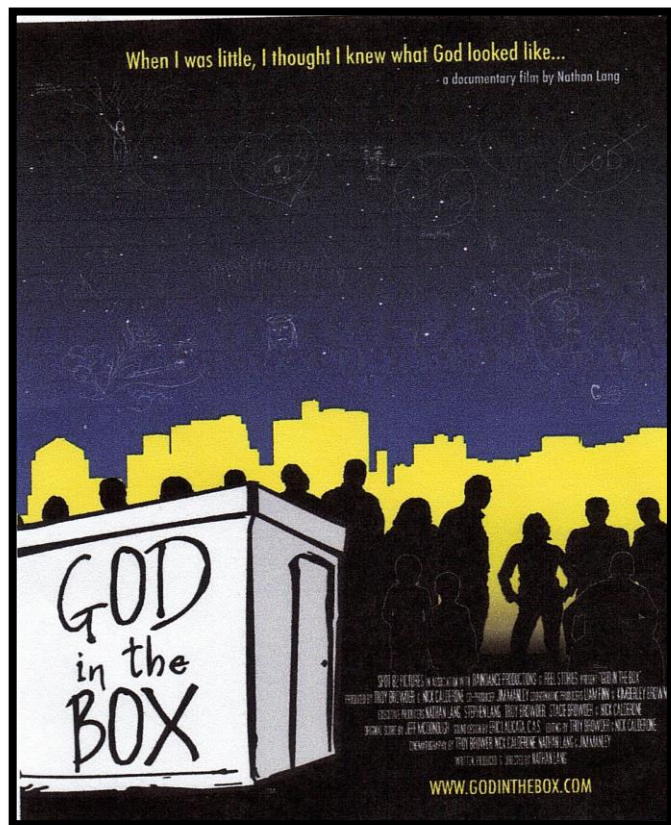
## NETWORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY: PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS IN 2012:

### Interfaith Forum Gudwara Vigil:

This Commission office helped facilitate bringing the vigil to the steps of City Hall in August. Commissioners as well as Commission staff participated. The purpose of the vigil was to take a stand against religious terrorism relative to the Wisconsin Sikh Gudwara tragedy, which is considered a hate crime. The vigil brought together Christians, Sikhs and others from different faiths to stand together shoulder to shoulder against this act of terror.

### “God in The Box” Film Screening:

Through the work of our Commission Liaison Rhea Baker-Ipek, the Commission continued its support of various community endeavors to educate the Columbus on many diversity issues, including an event sponsored by Interfaith Forum, IFF. IFF asked the Commission to put its support behind the film screening of the documentary along with audience dialogue with the creator, filmmaker and Director Nathan Lang at the Columbus Learning Center on March 29, 2012. The film raised a number of thought-provoking issues around race, religion, and gender. As part of our mission to educate the public and to break down barriers to inclusion, the Commission was proud to be part of this program.



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION 2012:

### **2012 Annual Dinner:**

The Commission held the most successful Annual Dinners with regard to the feedback evaluations since the evaluations were utilized to measure results of the dinner. With 250 guests in attendance and 60 evaluations returned, 99.9% of the evaluations were rated either strongly agree or agree as to factors such as “content of presentations and increased knowledge and understanding of local diversity and human rights issues; interest in the Human

Rights commission and volunteering for the Commission.” Comments included the following: “Outstanding Program, an inspiration to live by”; “Excellent Speaker”; “Use this year as an example. This was the best yet. Mr. Visconti was fantastic” and finally “Keep up the excellent work.”



*Keynote Speaker Luke Visconti*

**2012 Essay/Art Contest:** The Essay and Art Contest which is traditionally part of the Commission’s Annual Dinner framework, received close to 400 contest entries. The Commission deems the contest as a means to educate and engage students on issues of diversity and human rights.

### **2012 William R. Laws Human Rights Award Recipient:**

***BOB PITMAN,***  
Director, Mill Race Center



The Commission selected Mr. Pitman, Director of Mill Race Center, because of his significant body of work regarding on issues regarding senior citizens. The Commission recognized Mr. Pitman’s achievements in the field of senior and aging populations regarding his promotion of diverse and inclusive activities and educational programming at Mill Race, including race, disability, multiculturalism and sexual orientation through its key collaborative role on the Partners in Education (PIE) programming throughout the community and many other key education organizations. His work for seniors reaches all the way back to when he worked at Wichita State University. During his tenure at Mill Race, he was the National Chairman of the National Institute of Senior Centers in 2009.

## SCENES FROM 2012 ANNUAL DINNER





## MR. LUKE VISCONTI

**DiversityInc Media LLC,  
Chief Executive Officer**

Luke Visconti is the Chief Executive Officer of DiversityInc Media LLC. He directs all editorial and business operations of the publication, as well as events and the consulting practice. Mr. Visconti developed and directs the methodology for The DiversityInc Top 50 Companies for Diversity®, now in its 12th year. He also established the benchmarking consulting practice that is the core of DiversityInc's business. His column, "Ask the White Guy," is a top draw on DiversityInc.com. He is a frequent senior-level lecturer on the business benefits of diversity to corporations.

## CHRC Diversity Roundtable:

### THE LUKE VISCONTI COLUMBUS LEADERSHIP DIVERSITY ROUNDTABLE: "A LOCAL DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY DILEMMAS"

April 20, 2012  
7:30 AM-12 NOON

*The day following the Annual Dinner, the Commission implemented the community's first Diversity Roundtable where we were able to reach maximum capacity of 50 invited representatives from areas such as business, education, advocacy, faith-based organizations, and government. This event was a highlight of the Annual Dinner process and the Commission's community education activities as the program provided community leaders an opportunity to dialogue with Mr. Visconti in regard to diversity issues in their perspective field or areas of concern.*



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION CON'T:

### **Not-for-profit Organizations Training:**

The Director and/or Deputy Director provided training and/or community presentations for the following:

- 10 United Way not-for-profit Agency Directors or Representatives
- Staff of Just Friends Adult Daycare Services
- CAMEO
- Columbus Area Arts Council
- Leadership Bartholomew County

### **Fire Department Anti-harassment Training:**

At the request of the Fire Department, Director Smith provided two weeks of training on anti-harassment. From December 10-19, Director Smith conducted nine sessions, which included 70 employees.

### **Indiana Governor's Council on Disabilities Conference:**

On behalf of Mayor Brown, Director Smith participated on a panel in a discussion regarding Livable Communities as part of the Indiana governors Statewide Conference for People with Disabilities. The theme was Community Connections. Director Smith spoke about welcoming community initiatives and mayor's advisory council on disabilities. The panel included Lewis Ricci Director of the Indiana Arts commission, Gwen Langley Director of Government and Global Community Relations, mayors of Linton and Huntington and a representative from the Valparaiso Planning Department. Columbus is on the right trajectory. The discussion was an attempt to broaden the conversation about people with disabilities in the context of community-wide initiatives and how to involve people with disabilities in those initiatives.

### **Regional Continuing Legal Education Seminar:**

In collaboration with the Indiana Civil Rights Commission, the Commission hosted a Statewide Continuing Legal Education Seminar on Friday April 18 the Meeting Hall. The program is an Equal Employment Law Update. The program had 51 attendees, comprised of mostly attorneys.

### **Commissioner Presentation in recognition of Dr. Martin Luther King Day:**

Commissioner John Roberts provided a presentation on Dr. Martin Luther King to St. Peters' Elementary School students. Commissioner Roberts also provided presentations to Southside elementary School students as well. He continues to receive kudos yearly invites to return to educate students about the work of Dr. Martin Luther King.

### **Commissioner Moderator – “Muslims Don’t All Look Alike”:**

On November 15, 2012, Commissioner Roberts moderated the Welcoming Community II grant program “Muslims Don’t all look alike”. The program was almost filled to capacity.

### **Commissioner Facilitator - Sustained Community Dialogue:**

Commissioner Baker-Ipek and Deputy Director Jordan served as facilitators on this pilot program aimed at creating a process on community dialogue in Columbus on various issues including possible topics such as diversity and inclusion.

### **Black History Month Presentation – CAMEO February Monthly Meeting:**

On February 8, The Commission staff provided the presentation for the CAMEO general membership meeting on February 8. The African American Association was the host culture – Deputy Director Jordan provided a short presentation on the Tuskegee Airmen; staff provided food representative of African American culture along with an historical context. Attended by Mayor Brown and Director Smith, the meeting was very well attended.

### **NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet:**

The Commission was represented by Director Lorraine Smith at the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet held by the local chapter of the NAACP.

### **Calvary Community Church Black History Month Celebration:**

On February 19, Director Smith and Commissioner Roberts attended the Black History Month event at Calvary Community church where the Mayor Brown presented and read a proclamation.

### **Heritage Fund – Outreach Committee:**

Director Lorraine Smith continued her role on Heritage Fund Board and as Chair of the Outreach Committee. The Outreach Committee developed the Welcoming Community II Grants program which awarded 13 grants to community organizations to develop programs and activities which will educate and raise awareness on welcoming community issues.

## COMMISSIONER LIAISON ACTIVITIES 2012:

- **Inclusive Community Coalition:** *Commissioner John Stroh* continued his liaison role with the ICC, a community group formed in 2007 to focus on community education regarding sexual orientation and gender identity through non-political forums.
- **Interfaith Forum:** *Commissioner Greg Lewis* served as liaison to the Interfaith Forum for many years. He transitioned that role to *Commissioner Rhea Baker-Ipek* in 2011. Interfaith Forum seeks to create understanding about diverse faiths through dialogue and education.
- **Columbus Pride Alliance:** *Commissioner Kohen* transitioned his role as liaison to PAC to new *Commissioner Andre Marak*, who brought substantial experience in working with LGBT groups. Pride Alliance “seeks to build a community of inclusiveness, equality, and justice for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.”
- **Police Audit and Review Committee:** *Chairperson Gil Palmer*, serves as the Commission’s liaison and representative to this Committee. The Board of Works and Public Safety’s resolution concerning the Audit and Review Committee requires the Human Rights Commission to send a representative to this Committee which meets quarterly in an effort to review the work and effectiveness of police and community relations. One appeal to the Citizen’s Review Board of the audit and Review Committee was heard in 2011. The CHRC Director Lorraine Smith handles and facilitates all of the processing/paperwork of such an appeal.
- **CAMEO:** *Commissioner Greg Lewis* transitioned into the role of liaison to CAMEO in 2011 and continued that role into 2012. CAMEO was established in 2010 and is comprised of nine area ethnic associations that have joined together to share their cultures and traditions with each other and with the Columbus (Indiana) area community. Leaders from the founding associations have structured CAMEO to be the point of access for information and programming that recognizes and celebrates the changing face of our community.
- **BCSC/IUPUC Diversity Cabinet/Audit and Review Committees:** Chairperson Gil Palmer continued to serve on the BCSC Diversity Cabinet, IUPUC Diversity Cabinet as well as represent the Commission on the Audit and Review Committee.

**Commissioner Education:**

- **Senior Project – Welcoming Community Perceptions from High School**

**Students:** In February Serena Li, who moved to Columbus from China, delivered her Senior Project DVD to the Commission and the Commissioners heard a presentation from Ms. Li as to her “study of perceptions amongst high school immigrant students on how welcoming Columbus is.

- **I-Grad Presentation to Commission:** The Commissioners heard from Luz Michel and Dave Wright to learn more about the I-Grad program and how the Commission can help, particularly in regard to assisting the graduation rates for African Americans and immigrants.

**Staff Community Connections:**

Staff continued to serve as a Commission resource/liaison in a number of roles to provide a Human Rights Perspective including organizations such as:

- Director Smith:
  - Chair of the Heritage Fund Outreach Committee
  - Member of Heritage Fund Grants Committee, Executive Committee, Grants Committee
  - Advisor to CAMEO
  - Member of the IUPUC Department of Education Advisory Board
  - Mentor to an East High School student's senior project on anti-bullying over the course of the 2011-2012 academic calendar year.
  - Along with Mayor Brown, participated in a dialogue with the members of the SAT/Aktion organization to discuss the needs of persons with disabilities
  - Participated as a community sponsor for an International Hires Welcoming Community Six Sigma Project
  - Deputy Director and Director Smith provided the Black History Month presentation for CAMEO 2012 February Monthly Meeting
  - Along with several Commissioners, represented the Commission at the 2012 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Breakfast
- Deputy Director Jordan served on :
  - Board Member, Bartholomew County School Foundation
  - Member, Teen Pregnancy Workgroup
  - Member, Leadership Bartholomew County Class 11-12 – graduated in May
  - Provided a presentation "Inclusivity Matters" to IUPUC students
  - Facilitated presentation on Indonesia as part of the Great Decision Series
  - Member, People Trails Working Committee, to assist with reaching diverse populations
  - Member, CAMEO
  - Member, Community Doula Advisory Team
  - Adviser, Su Casa Columbus
  - Member, United Way Community Impact Team
  - Member, Women's Giving Circle Grants Committee
  - Member, Heritage Fund Scholarship Committee
- Betsy Schuette, the administrative assistant, became an Advocates for Children, CASA volunteer in 2012

## **Professional Development and Continuing Legal Education For Staff and Commissioners:**

Director Smith attended the Quarterly meeting of the Indiana consortium of Human Rights Agencies in Indianapolis

Deputy Director Jordan –

- The American Bar Association 6th Annual Conference on Labor and Employment Law 2012 - Atlanta, Georgia
- Continued her training as a member of Leadership Bartholomew County and was a member of the 2012 LBC Graduating class.
- Westlaw Training for the new system the office acquired
- New Lawyers Conference – Louisville, Kentucky

Betsy Schuette – To continue to hone her skills and also provide services to members of the disability community, she attended PDF Training class on how to make documents accessible for persons with disabilities



### COLUMBUS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

#### TOP FOUR STRATEGIC GOALS

##### **GOAL I - ENFORCING THE ORDINANCE :**

- *Effective case processing as a key staff priority*

##### **GOAL II - EDUCATING THE PUBLIC**

- *Implementation of current strategies and implementation of creative and innovative strategies which promote Welcoming Community, educate on anti-discrimination law, educate on the work of the commission and human rights history and diversity.*

##### **GOAL III - NETWORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY**

- *Maintain key stakeholder relationships with various welcoming community and diversity-related groups by becoming an organization knowledgeable on potential discrimination issues in the community.*

##### **GOAL IV - CHALLENGING ATTITUDES & SYSTEMS THAT CREATE BARRIERS TO EQUALITY**

- *Become a leader and/or partner in the development of innovative strategies and initiatives that break down systemic discrimination by providing solutions on discrimination issues proactively through the development of community networks; by creating awareness on Welcoming Community issues and by assisting Welcoming Community and diversity-oriented groups in their work including:*
  - *Convening and facilitating Mayor's Council on Disability and Accessibility*
  - *As applicable, serve as co-convenor of proposed Welcoming Community Stakeholder Council*
  - *Increasing Community Disability Issues Awareness*
  - *Providing Assistance on the City of Columbus' ADA Transition Plan as requested & appropriate*
  - *Support Heritage Fund Welcoming Community Catalyst Work*
  - *Support Mayor's City-wide Strategic Plan regarding Welcoming Community*

--- ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION:

October 31, 2012

# **COMMENTS ON THE HISTORY AND PURPOSE OF THE COLUMBUS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

## ***HISTORY***

The Columbus Human Rights Commission had its beginnings in 1962 when Mayor E. A. Welmer created the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations. The Commission began as a small group of concerned and respected local citizens with no power of legal enforcement. Complaints were filed in the Mayor's office or with individual Commissioners appointed by the Mayor. The Commissioners' only tool was their personal commitment to the formidable work of the Commission and their powers of verbal persuasion—they called it "friendly persuasion." The Commission, at this time, functioned under challenging conditions, without enforcement powers or city funding.

In 1972, because the City Council recognized the need for the Commission to have stronger tools with which to combat discrimination, City Council passed an Ordinance that gave the Commission legal enforcement powers. At this time, the name was changed from the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations to the Columbus Human Rights Commission. In 1975, a part-time Administrative Assistant for the Commission was hired and funded by the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA). In 1977, the City Council reaffirmed its commitment to a community that does not tolerate discrimination by funding the Commission. In the 1980s and most recently in 1992, the jurisdiction and scope of the Human Rights Ordinance was expanded by City Council, transforming the Columbus Human Rights Commission into the comprehensive civil rights enforcement agency it is today.

## ***PURPOSE OF LOCAL COMMISSIONS:***

Most historians place the beginning of the civil rights movement in the era 1950 through 1968. Beginning in 1967 with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1967, the federal government passed the most significant civil rights legislation that this country would ever see and for the first time, the full force of the federal government was exercised against discrimination in this country. This passage sent a strong message that this country stood firmly behind the concepts of equal opportunity and non-segregation. The passage of the legislation was passed with the notion discrimination is not bound by state, region or locality and that local governments support the effort of anti-discrimination. Just as the federal government serves as the conscience of the nation regarding discrimination, localities serve as the conscience of cities and towns. To address the broad nature of discrimination, which can occur in various facets of community life, many states and localities within those states created human rights commissions to fill in the gaps between federal, state and local efforts to help combat discrimination. The continuing attack on the problem of discrimination must be equally broad. It must be both private and public – it must be conducted at national, state, and local levels – it must include action from the legislative, judicial and executive branches. Discrimination knows no sectional or state boundaries. As a result, the Columbus Human Rights Commission currently operates in a legal system of parallel jurisdiction – the local ordinance enforced by the Commission contains language very similar to state statute, enforced by the Indiana Civil Rights Commission, and federal statutes, enforced by various federal government agencies.

***COLUMBUS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION CONTRIBUTES TO THE VITALITY OF ITS COMMUNITY BY PLAYING AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN A BROAD CIRCLE OF REMEDIES IN FIVE MAIN AREAS:***

Even with progress over the past four decades, discrimination persists and limits opportunity – all of which negates the economic health and quality of life of a community. As a result, local commissions exist to make sure that everyone in the community has an equal opportunity in employment, housing, education, credit and public accommodations. Local commissions don't exist to make money or produce a profit; it doesn't produce a tangible product. But a fundamental question for many is: how do local Commissions, such as the Columbus Human Rights Commission, contribute to the overall success and welcoming nature of a community?

The Columbus Human Rights Commission contributes to Columbus' vitality and excellent quality of life by playing an integral role in a broad circle of remedies in five main areas: (1) Strategic partnering in Economic Development, (2) Comprehensive Enforcement of Civil Rights Laws, (3) Proactive Enforcement by providing free technical assistance to local businesses and community outreach to organizations, (4) the ability to respond to rapidly changing demographics, and (5) in providing local solutions to local problems:

***The Commission is a strategic partner in economic development:***

Clearly, discrimination hampers the economic growth of a community by preventing the maximum development and utilization of our manpower. The federal and state governments have decided that local civil rights enforcement is a priority they wish to encourage because federal and state civil rights agencies continue to be over-burdened with cases, under-staffed and stretched resources and they cannot always provide the most comprehensive enforcement of civil rights law. As a result, some federal and state grants require a community to have local civil rights enforcement to even be considered for the grant money, and most federal and state grants favor applicants who have local enforcement of civil rights. Although the city's budget is made up of local tax dollars, a portion of the city's budget each year is made up of federal and state funds, not just local tax dollars. And because the federal and state governments have control over these taxpayer-supported funds, they can choose which communities will receive federal and state funds. The local Commission helps the city receive over 2 million dollars a year in state and federal grants for economic development that make possible senior housing, affordable housing, city buses and bus transportation, better roads and bridges, better technology for crime-fighting and many other improvements.

***The Commission provides more comprehensive enforcement of civil rights laws:***

The city's decision to have local civil rights enforcement is like the city's decision to have a local police force—the county's sheriff's department is still there and the state police are still there, and the FBI is still there, but citizens of Columbus benefit by getting a police response to their 911 call in roughly five minutes, rather than possibly waiting longer if another law enforcement agency had to respond. By having local enforcement of civil rights, the city receives more comprehensive enforcement. The strong institutional presence of the local commission helps maximize equal opportunity services.

Local Commissions ensure that individuals have meaningful access to EEO technical expertise and the investigatory process. By responding effectively to a wide array of discrimination cases that have varying levels of complexity, claimants are ensured that they have access to enforcement processes to vindicate citizens' rights.

The Commission has jurisdiction to look into complaints filed against employers with six or more employees, which is smaller than the EEOC's jurisdiction. The Columbus Human Rights Commission is the only agency required to investigate all officially filed complaints of discrimination in the City of Columbus. What does that mean in real terms? It means the little guy can get help. It means a server in a restaurant who is sexually harassed can get help, even if she does not work for a national chain of restaurants. The Columbus Human Rights Commission provides more comprehensive enforcement and a quicker response.

***The Commission provides cost effective technical assistance to local businesses and community outreach programs, in order to prevent local problems before they occur:***

While Columbus is home to a Fortune 500 company who has attorneys and human resource professionals working in-house, Columbus is also home to many small businesses that do not have the resources to have an attorney on retainer or have a large personnel department. Yet smaller businesses must comply with civil rights laws, too, and those same businesses support the work of the Commission through their payment of local tax dollars, as they do all local government services. The Commission provides local businesses with technical assistance without charge that is not available from state and federal agencies.

The staff of the Commission answer business people's questions on the phone, provide model policies and other resources, and provide training without charge to local employers and their employees, to local property management companies and their employees, to local public and private schools, and to local places of public accommodation. Area businesses receive an extremely high level of service from the Commission, which they support through their payment of local taxes. A local commission facilitates cost effective, efficient delivery of services in the prevention of discrimination and remedy of discrimination.

The intangible value of these trainings and resources offered by the Commission come in the form of having a direct impact upon changed behavior in our schools, workplaces and public accommodations, with a good deal of the work done behind the scenes. For instance, so much work done behind the scenes is nevertheless very valuable to the community, and those individualized resources and support are not available on a federal and state level. The local commission provides cost-effective, efficient delivery of human rights services.

***The Commission provides Columbus with the ability to respond to rapidly changing demographics:***

The Columbus community is changing demographically, which creates a need to respond in a way that facilitates community growth and stability and allows all community members to prosper. Changing demographics and shifting population trends only heighten the critical need for outreach into local communities. People must have confidence in a community's ability to respond effectively when they seek assistance in vindicating their rights. But the presence of the Columbus Human Rights Commission makes Columbus well positioned to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse community it serves. As a 28

critical piece to creating a welcoming community and a healthy quality of life, the Columbus Human Rights Commission partners with community groups to educate community members about their legal rights and to educate employers about their legal obligations – while also bridging understanding on cultural differences.

***The Commission, a local, all-volunteer eleven-member Board, ensures that here is a local alternative – local solutions to local problems, rather than civil rights law enforcement agencies from the federal government and the state government being the only alternative—and therefore coming to Columbus to investigate and enforce all civil rights violations.***

The Commission was originally founded when there was no financial incentive to provide local enforcement of civil rights. Local citizens saw that there were problems of discrimination in Columbus that were not being adequately addressed by state and federal agencies, and decided to address them locally. According to testimony from the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, it is generally held that a complaint handled at the local level affords an opportunity for a more expedient response and a greater potential for a satisfactory resolution. Many Columbus citizens believed, and still believe that the best solutions to challenges facing this community will come from within this community. All staff persons are required to live in or adjacent to Bartholomew County, and all of the volunteers who serve as Commissioners live in Bartholomew County. The Commission is controlled by an eleven-member Board of volunteers, appointed by City Council and sworn into office by the Mayor. The community originally founded the Commission because it was the right thing to do, and the reason the Commission continues to serve the community is not only because it makes sense financially, but simply because it is the right thing to do.

The Commission's fifty-year history stands for the principle that Columbus values all members of the community. Columbus is open to persons of all races, religions, abilities and ethnic backgrounds to join the community, contribute, and be fully included. Beginning in 1962, with wisdom and foresight, elected officials and other community leaders created the Commission in order to enforce the principles of fair treatment, respect, and inclusion, and with that same wisdom and foresight, today's elected officials and community leaders continue to sustain a strong Human Rights Commission. The continued support of City Council members and Mayors from both political parties has given Columbus a progressive human rights ordinance that identifies our community as committed to equal treatment and willing to strive toward full inclusion in all aspects of community life.

## **2013 BENJAMIN M. KING HUMAN RIGHTS ESSAY CONTEST**

Topic:

**"Journey into the Past.....**

**..... Adventure into the Future"\***



## **2013 J. IRWIN MILLER HUMAN RIGHTS ART CONTEST**

TOPIC:

**COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS**

**"Access, engagement and relationships" reminds us of the vital links that make a connected, livable community. If our communities are to grow and prosper, we must develop "Community Connections" through access, civic engagement and by encouraging neighbors to support one another.**



## **2013 HUMAN RIGHTS ART & ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS**

Winners of the Benjamin M. King Essay and J. Irwin Miller Art Contests are honored at the Commission's annual dinner where they are presented with a \$75 reward, and a book of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s sermons and writings. The Human Rights Commission congratulates the following winners of the 2013 Essay & Art Contests:

### **Elementary Essay**

Adam Saad	5 <sup>th</sup> grade
Jerry D. Maulin –Teacher	ABC Stewart

### **Elementary Art**

Agustina Fainguersch	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Liz Stroh – Teacher	Parkside Elementary

### **Middle School Essay**

Kiana Snyder	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Mindy Summers – Teacher	Central Middle School

### **Middle School Art**

Reilly Jones	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Mindy Summers – Teacher	Central Middle School

### **High School Essay**

Kevin Luo	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Mimi Bingham - Teacher	Columbus North High School

# **2013 HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ESSAY/ART CONTEST**

## **PARTICIPATING JUDGES AND TEACHERS**

Coordinating a countywide essay/art contest is a major undertaking that would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of volunteer judges, who are citizens from the community who gave up their time for several weeks in order to read the essays and select the winners. Area teachers, many of whom made the contest part of their school assignments, supported the essay contest, thereby insuring its success.

### **PARTICIPATING JUDGES**

Amy Lian  
Sarah Gehring  
Lisa Shafran  
Jacque Douglas  
Heather Gipson  
Joe Shafran  
Matthew Barbiea  
Ann King  
Sherri Mckinney  
Doug Stender  
Paula Constant  
Jocelyn Ramos  
John Forte  
Maria Decker  
Steve Ferree  
Mary Harmon

Richard Whitney  
Sahar Al- Masari  
Sharmila Vivekanandan  
Mike Shelton  
Therese Copeland  
Janice Montgomery  
Susan Staley  
Annette Barnes  
Suzi Gentry  
Lisa Siefker Bailey  
Sarah Warfield  
Marie Henning  
Anand Sundar Ram  
Hutch Schumaker  
Warren Ward

Rhea Baker Ipek  
Akila Panneerselvam  
Mary Clare Speckner  
Rebecca Ho  
Joseph Dosterglick  
Tameika Jones  
Sarah Grey  
Michael Siegel  
Miranda Cross  
Marwan Wafa  
Jill Tasker  
Sean O'Leary  
Chuck Grimes  
Sandy LaBarbera  
Trena Carter

## ESSAY WINNER HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION BY KEVIN LUO

### Yearning for Learning

Knowledge powers advancement. Information is the fuel that drives civilization forward. Humankind has progressed extremely well due to our desire to understand our surroundings and how everything functions. Humans continue to progress and transform the world because there are many who possess an unquenchable thirst for intelligence. Linzhu Yang, 64 years old, is the personification of the human determination to learn.

When Linzhu was a child growing up on a farm in China, little opportunity was available to receive education. She had to work on the farm every day because of the family's monetary struggles. Too much output would be lost if Linzhu's parents permitted her to go to school. However, Linzhu was not going to let any obstacles stop her.

One summer, when Linzhu was 10, the desire to become educated overwhelmed her. The morning before the first day of school, she snuck out of the farm while tending to the sheep and walked to the nearest school. Upon her arrival, she conversed with the staff at the school. Admiring her tenacity and eagerness, the teachers accepted her as a student. After staying at school all day, Linzhu returned to the farm unnoticed.

After another couple of days sneaking out, Linzhu's parents finally found out. Despite their irritation at Linzhu for not fulfilling her obligations on the farm, they realized that receiving an education was incredibly important to Linzhu. They formed a compromise, agreeing to allow her to go to school for half of the day as long as she returned and completed essential farm work.

Linzhu's unwavering resolve is a perfect example of why humans have come so far. She impressed the importance of learning upon her children, who became highly successful. Linzhu Yang's determination to learn is a remarkable inspiration to everyone around her.

## **ESSAY WINNER MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVISION BY KIANA SYNDER**

Everyone is presented with obstacles they must overcome. My grandmother is 57, and life has thrown her many curveballs. She handles them with great consideration. I admire her because she lives each day to the fullest and doesn't care what others think. She wants everyone to feel loved and cared for. These qualities helped her overcome many obstacles throughout her lifetime. She told me of one.

In 1993, the AIDS virus still wasn't truly understood by the public. People were still under the impression that you could contract it from using the same bathroom as someone with the virus, or sitting near them. At this time my grandmother worked at Ameritech, a business which has now transformed into AT&T. She was a manager over about 50 people, and one of her employees had gotten the virus from a blood transfusion. He was a wonderful man, and my grandmother was sad to see him diagnosed with HIV.

This was problematic because her staff was uneducated on the disease. They would not use the bathrooms, sit near him, and some people would give him dirty looks thinking it was his fault. My grandmother called the health department and had people come to answer her employees' questions, and with help they all learned that they could not get the man's disease as easily as thought. The problem was resolved. In fact, they all took turns tending to him on his death bed.

This story inspires me because my grandmother used her resources to resolve a situation with ease and helped a man be more comfortable in his place of work. She tells me to always help someone else because one day you might just be the person who needs the help, and you can only hope that someone will be there for you.

**ESSAY WINNER Elementary School Division BY ADAM SAAD**

Born in Tunisia, September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1949, my grandmother was the oldest of two sisters and one brother. Her country was governed as a French protectorate. Until she was eight the French soldiers were all over the country. Her father was a judge who fought for independence. He also was part of the women's rights movement. He didn't accept the fact that: women have to wear the veil (whether they liked it or not). Women had to marry at the age of fourteen with a person that they had never met. As a child she was affected and touched by her father's thoughts. She was given to choose her own style of dress based on her personal taste. She was one of few girls that actually went to school. Her school looked like a big house with a big play area in the center surrounded by rooms all indoors. All the teachers were French they were very nice and helpful to the student. She was forced to sing the French pledge of allegiance every morning. She was very frustrated that nothing was taught at school about her country or her language.

She wanted to be a teacher, a French teacher but the one who talks about the Tunisian culture.

Education is free in her country that is why she did not have to work before graduation. After teaching for few years, she decided to do more and move on to a new career, so she became a lawyer. Grandmother's advice to the youth of the world is "Knowledge is the key to Success." And "Never give up".

The happiest things in her life were every success she Putting a smile on her parents face. She is very concerned about the economic crises.

# 2013 Quotable Quotes

- ❖ "Everyone get to the end of their life in a different way"
- ❖ "Human Rights are that of which to allow us to be Human"
- ❖ "He learned to focus on the present and not dwell in the past"
- ❖ "It's better to do things for others then just thinking about yourself"
- ❖ "Give to the world the best you have, and the world will give back the best to you"
- ❖ "As a man progresses through his life, it is like a book, you cannot flip from cover to cover and expect to understand it, you must read, page by page, to uncover the truth."
- ❖ "He sees the good in people when sometime they do not see it in themselves"
- ❖ "Nothing beats a failure but a try"
- ❖ "My grandmother lived throughout one of the toughest times in American history, even with a terribly small amount of supplies. I have never been more fascinated in my life as I was when my grandmother told me her story of survival."
- ❖ "You've got to be careful not to measure your ambitions by other people's"
- ❖ "Fight; show life what you are made of. Make something of yourself"
- ❖ "I want to show people that even if you come from poverty, if you have enough determination, you can and will get far"
- ❖ "Never think about tomorrow until today is done"
- ❖ "Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened"
- ❖ "Responsibility is the ability to respond appropriately to a situation. You have to make choices"
- ❖ "Part of success is doing something no one else understands. As long as you do whatever you do to the best of your abilities and totally immerse yourself in what you do, you are successful."
- ❖ "His goal for his children was never be prejudice against anyone for anything"
- ❖ "I learned from her that whatever life throws at you to keep on going"
- ❖ "He believes that nothing changed about people needing a peace of heart and happiness only God can provide"
- ❖ "Her advice for the youth of America is to get a good education and don't give up on what you want to be"
- ❖ "The way people look at things today is so different from the way people saw things when I was growing up. Her advice for the youth of America is to always stay close to your family and to what is important to you and to have a realistic ambition that is always in your mind and to never give up on it"
- ❖ "You never know you love something until you try it"
- ❖ "Even though you go through some hardships in life, If you work hard and believe anything can happen"
- ❖ "It's very important to have good morals, to be thoughtful and kind to others, and to believe in God"
- ❖ "I'm the only me that there will ever be. Each day I'll always try my best to make the most of me"
- ❖ "We are all human beings and we are all on the same team. It should not matter that we speak a different language or that we have different religions. We all need to be on the same team"
- ❖ "The lesson to the writer will always be, whether modern or vintage, life is more about the people and the things we treasure than it will ever be about the money or the positions we hold"
- ❖ "Any teenager like myself would unknowingly take freedom for granted. In fact, not many adults even think about what life would be like if we did not have freedom"

**THE 2013 WILLIAM R. LAWS HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD**

**“We hold these truths to be self-evident  
that all people are created equal...”**

**Presented to  
OWEN HUNGERFORD**



**FOR AN OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION  
TO MAKING THESE WORDS  
A REALITY IN COLUMBUS  
AND FOR  
CONTINUOUS SUPPORT OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

The Columbus Human Rights Commission

Columbus, Indiana

April 10, 2013



# In Memoriam:



**Larry Synder**

Disability Advocate &

Loyal Friend to the Columbus Human Rights  
Commission

1945-2012



**H. Pamela Allen**

Former Human Rights Commission

Director

1977-1980

# **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

**THE COMMISSION THANKS THE FOLLOWING  
OUTGOING COMMISSIONERS FOR THEIR  
DEDICATION AND HARD WORK:**

**Commissioner Rosalind Pegram**

**2007-2013**

**Commissioner Shiva Rallapalli**

**2009-2013**

**THE COMMISSION THANKS:**

**Mayor Kristen Brown**

**Council Liaison Tim Shuffett**

**Council Liaison Jim Lienhoop**

**City Attorney Kelly Benjamin**

**Columbus City Council Members**

**Will Miller**

**Donors of Complimentary Dinner Tickets**

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**Volunteers in Action**

**Trudi Smith**